

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for generating electricity and desalinating salinous water, the method comprising:

generating electricity with a fuel cell; and

providing the electricity to an electrical grid during peak times of consumer electricity demand; and

powering a desalination system with the electricity from the fuel cell to produce fresh water from the salinous water; and

increasing an amount of electricity to the desalination system during times other than the peak times of consumer electricity demand.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the salinous water is selected from a group including brackish water, sea water, and combinations thereof.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the desalination system is selected from the group including electrodialysis desalination systems, reverse osmosis desalination systems, multi-effect distillation desalination systems, mechanical vapor compression desalination systems, thermal vapor compression desalination systems, multi-stage flash desalination systems, humidification-dehumidification desalination systems, and combinations thereof.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising:

producing thermal energy exhaust as a byproduct of generating electricity with the fuel cell;

heating the salinous water with the thermal energy exhaust to produce heated salinous water; and

producing fresh water from the heated salinous water.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, additionally comprising:

introducing the thermal energy exhaust into a heat exchanger;

introducing the salinous water into the heat exchanger; and

heating the salinous water in the heat exchanger.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5, additionally comprising producing steam from the salinous water and condensing the steam to produce the fresh water.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6, wherein the fresh water is produced by multi-stage flash distillation.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 6, additionally comprising:

introducing the heated salinous water into a distillation chamber;
producing steam in the distillation chamber;
condensing the steam in the distillation chamber to produce fresh water.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 6, wherein a salinous water feed line extends through the distillation chamber and the steam is condensed using the salinous water feed line.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 7, wherein a portion of the generated electricity powers the multi-stage flash desalination.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 5, additionally comprising introducing the heated salinous water into a reverse osmosis system.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein a portion of the generated electricity powers the reverse osmosis system.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12, wherein the thermal energy exhaust heats the salinous water during a first predetermined period and

during a second predetermined period the thermal energy exhaust generates additional electricity.

Claims 14-20 (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A hybrid system for generating electricity and desalinating salinous water, comprising:

a fuel cell, wherein the fuel cell generates electricity and thermal energy exhaust; and

a desalination system powered by the fuel cell; and

a means for directing the electricity to at least one of an electrical grid and the desalination system.

22. (Currently Amended) The hybrid system of Claim 21, wherein the fuel cell is selected from a group including proton exchange membrane fuel cells, alkaline fuel cells, phosphoric acid fuel cells, molten carbonate fuel cells, solid oxide fuel cells, and combinations thereof.

23. (Original) The hybrid system of Claim 21, additionally comprising:

a heat exchanger connected to the fuel cell to receive the thermal energy exhaust;

a salinous water feed line in combination with the heat exchanger, wherein the salinous water feed line is adapted to transfer unheated salinous water to the heat exchanger and to transfer heated salinous water from the heat exchanger; and

a desalination system connected to the salinous water feed line, the desalination system adapted to remove salt or brine from the heated salinous water.

Claims 24-26 (Canceled)

27. (Original) The hybrid system of Claim 21, wherein the desalination system comprises a reverse osmosis system.

28. (Original) The hybrid system of Claim 21, wherein the desalination system comprises a flash distillation system.

29. (New) The hybrid system of Claim 21, additionally comprising a means for controlling the directing of electricity, wherein an amount of the electricity directed to the desalination system is at least reduced during times of peak consumer electricity demand.

Serial No. 10/762,771

30. (New) The hybrid system of Claim 23, additionally comprising a means for controlling the directing of electricity, wherein an amount of the electricity directed to the desalination system is at least reduced during times of peak consumer electricity demand.